

1 SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 39

2 **46TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2004**

3 INTRODUCED BY

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10 A JOINT MEMORIAL

11 DIRECTING THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND OTHER  
12 APPROPRIATE STATE AGENCIES TO STUDY MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES OF  
13 STUDENTS IN NEW MEXICO'S COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES AND ANALYZE  
14 EXISTING HEALTH AND COUNSELING SERVICES AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS.  
15

16 WHEREAS, the state is proud of its comprehensive and  
17 inexpensive provision of higher education to its citizens; and

18 WHEREAS, the state enrolls well over one hundred ten  
19 thousand students in twenty-five state-supported institutions  
20 of higher education; and

21 WHEREAS, the state very much values the physical and  
22 mental well-being of all its college and university students;  
23 and

24 WHEREAS, national studies have indicated that forty-five  
25 percent of college students reported having difficulty

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1 functioning because of depression at least once a year; and

2 WHEREAS, national surveys of counseling center directors  
3 found that eighty-five percent of North American student  
4 counseling centers reported an increase in students with  
5 "severe psychological problems"; and

6 WHEREAS, the suicide rate among New Mexicans aged fifteen  
7 through twenty-four averaged seventeen and one-half percent per  
8 one hundred thousand in population from 1999 through 2001, and  
9 in 2002, the suicide rate for that age group averaged eighteen  
10 and nine-tenths percent per one hundred thousand in population,  
11 thereby ranking New Mexico first in the nation in suicides in  
12 this age group; and

13 WHEREAS, increased stress, use of psychotropic drugs, peer  
14 relationships and pressure to succeed are only some of the  
15 issues facing today's college students; and

16 WHEREAS, little is known about these trends and issues in  
17 New Mexico; and

18 WHEREAS, information and data about the well-being of  
19 college students in New Mexico is very valuable and integral to  
20 the deliberations of the legislature;

21 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
22 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that it direct the commission on higher  
23 education and other appropriate state agencies to conduct a  
24 study to include three- to five-year trends in the number of  
25 referrals for counseling therapy; the numbers of suicides or

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1 other catastrophic incidences; the time of day and the place  
2 that serious to severe behavioral events occur for both campus  
3 and off-campus settings; the years in colleges or universities  
4 when more incidences occur; the most common issues or problems  
5 that become subjects of referrals and counseling; and the  
6 relationship of behavioral problems to dropping out of school;  
7 and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study analyze the existing  
9 student services for health and counseling that are made  
10 available at New Mexico colleges and universities for adequacy  
11 and timely coverage, sufficient staffing, preparation of  
12 emergencies, preparation of practitioners and funding trends;  
13 and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
15 transmitted to the commission on higher education, all New  
16 Mexico college and university presidents and vice presidents  
17 and all deans or directors of New Mexico college and university  
18 student services.

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